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Sen. Johnson's 'data theft notification' legislation passed by Senate

LANSING – Legislation requiring companies to notify Michigan residents when their personal, credit or medical information has been stolen or misused was approved by the Michigan Senate recently, said state Sen. Shirley Johnson.

“Technology has afforded us many conveniences in modern history, but has also resulted in a new wave of damaging and sophisticated crimes,” said Johnson, R-Troy. “Identity theft is a serious problem that must be countered. When an individual’s personal information is compromised, it is vital they are alerted in a timely manner so they may take the necessary measures to protect themselves.”

Sponsored by Johnson, Senate Bill 309 would require companies to notify Michigan residents when such information has been stolen or misused.

In February 2005, ChoicePoint, a national data aggregating company, announced that the personal information of 145,000 U.S. residents had been stolen in October 2004. The company maintains and sells background files which are generated from information gleaned from public and private records.

Currently, Michigan law does not require companies to notify affected individuals when their information is stolen or used for fraudulent purposes, while 35 other states already have measures in place.

Johnson worked closely with Sen. Alan Cropsey, R-DeWitt, who chairs the Senate Committee on Judiciary, to develop legislation protecting Michigan residents.

“I am very pleased with the excellent compromise that this legislation represents between the business community and consumer advocacy groups,” Johnson said. “We have worked diligently on this legislation and I couldn’t be happier with the outcome.”

SB 309 will now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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